

Message Text

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FOR: SECSTATE EA/PHL ONLY
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E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS - AUGUST 19 - 25

I. PSYCHOLOGICAL

A. WORLD LAW CONFERENCE FEATURES HUMAN RIGHTS -- FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS, IN ADVANCE OF AND NOW DURING THE WORLD PEACE THROUGH LAW CONFERENCE IN MANILA, THE TERM "HUMAN RIGHTS" HAS BEEN DEBATED, EXTOLLED, DEFINED AND ABUSED. SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE AS WELL AS LOCAL PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE ALL TRIED THEIR HAND AT EXPLAINING JUST WHAT THIS PHENOMENON IS. SEVERAL THEMES HAVE EMERGED FROM THE DISCUSSION, AT LEAST FROM THE PHILIPPINE PERSPECTIVE. FIRST, AND FOREMOST, THE CONCLUSION THAT THE PHILIPPINES IS NOT A VIOLATOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BEEN MADE BY PRACTICALLY EVERY MEDIUM IN THE COUNTRY. THE DAILY EXPRESS, FOR EXAMPLE, SAYS "THE COUNTRY'S WHOLEHEARTED PARTICIPATION IN THIS CONFERENCE AS HOST EVEN OF SUCH AN AUGUST BODY, PERHAPS SERVES AS A SMALL BUT ELOQUENT REBUTTAL" TO THE CHARGES OF CURTAILMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES. A SECOND THEME IS THAT, AS ANOTHER EXPRESS EDITORIAL

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PUT IT: "THE QUESTION (OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS) IS ONE OF GIVING SUBSTANCE TO THESE PRINCIPLES IN THE LIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES OBTAINING IN A PARTICULAR COUNTRY--THE PEOPLE'S TEMPER, CULTURE AND HISTORY; THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION.." COLUMNIST DOROY VALENCIA CHOOSES TO STICK TO THE NATIONALIST THEM THAT "IN THE ULTIMATE ANALYSIS, IT IS NOT WHAT FOREIGNERS THINK OF OUR GOVERNMENT BUT HOW WE, THE FILIPINOS, THINK OF IT."

HE DOESN'T FAIL TO TAKE ON THE U.S. DIRECTLY, SAYING THAT AMERICA "DEMANDS CONFORMITY WITH HER OWN FORM OF GOVERNMENT."

THE BULLETIN TODAY, IN RAISING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, POINTED OUT THE NEED TO DISTINGUISH A "HIERARCHY OF RIGHTS". THE BULLETIN QUOTED A SPEECH BY THE PHILIPPINE CHIEF JUSTICE AT THE CONFERENCE, IN WHICH HE SAID: "IN THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG, DEVELOPING EMERGENT NATIONS, AND IN THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING THEIR ASPIRATIONS SPEEDILY, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A NEED NOT TO SUPPRESS BUT TO RESTRICT SOME TRADITIONAL FORMS OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, AND THE AFFLUENT AND THE ENLIGHTENED SECTORS OF SOCIETY HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO GIVE UP SOMETHING FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF THE GREAT MAJORITY." FINALLY, THE QUESTION OF U.S. APPLICATION OF ITS HOWN HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY TO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WAS ADDRESSED. EXPRESS COLUMNIST NESTOR MATA, FOR INSTANCE, CONCLUDES THAT "AT MOST ONE CAN SAY THAT JIMMY CARTER'S MORALISTIC STAND SEEMS FLAWED BY SELECTIVITY."

B. ANOTHER BASE ISSUE LOOMS -- RAPE CHARGES HAVE BEEN FILED AGAINST A SENIOR OFFICER AT CLARK AIR BASE BY A FILIPINA EMPLOYEE OF CAMP O'DONNELL, WHERE HE WAS BASE COMMANDER UNTIL EARLY THIS MONTH. THUS FAR THE STORY HAS BEEN PLAYED RELATIVELY FACTUALLY BY THE MEDIA, BUT THE WHOLE SITUATION HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF A HIGHLY EMOTIONAL AND POTENTIALLY DAMAGING ISSUE, IF THE COMMENTATORS SHOULD BE UNLEASHED.

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C. WHEAT GETS SOME ATTENTION -- IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL, AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTURO TANCO CALLED ON THE U.S. CONGRESS THIS WEEK OT TO PASS A BILL WHICH WOULD IDLE U.S. WHEAT LANDS IN ORDER TO PROP UP THE PRICE. TANCO CITED THE WORLDWIDE FOOD SHORTAGE AS HIS REASON. THE DAILY EXPRESS MADE HIS CALL THE SUBJECT OF AN EDITORIAL LATER IN THE WEEK, TERMING THE POSSIBILITY OF PRODUCTION DECREASE "DISTURBING NEWS" AND CONCLUDING -- TO COME FULL CIRCLE -- THAT "IT WOULD BE MOST DIFFICULT FOR THE UNITED STATES, WITH ITS CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, TO JUSTIFY SUCH A MOVE."

II. SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

A. POET RITCHIE IN RETURN ENGAGEMENT -- AMERICAN POET ELIZAVIETTA RITCHIE DEPARTED THE PHILIPPINES ON AUGUST 21 AFTER A WEEK OF PROGRAMS IN DAVAO AND MANILA. RITCHIE CONDUCTED A WELL-ATTENDED 3-DAY WORKSHOP AUGUST 15-17 FOR WRITERS AND POETS IN DAVAO, CO-SPONSORED BY USIS AND THE ATENEO DE DAVAO. HER AUGUST 19 READING AT THE JEFFERSON CENTER IN MANILA WAS NEARLY RAINED OUT BY TYPHOON IBIANG, BUT A DEDICATED GROUP OF POETRY ENTHUSIASTS SHOWED UP TO LISTEN AND TO HELP LAUNCH HER

NEW BOOK "MOVING TO LARGER QUARTERS." INSPIRED BY HER PREVIOUS VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES IN APRIL, 1977, "QUARTERS" WAS PUBLISHED BY A GROUP OF YOUNG FILIPINOS INTERESTED IN THE CREATIVE ARTS, AND IS ONE OF THE FIRST ORIGINAL COLLECTIONS OF POEMS BY A FOREIGN POET TO BE PUBLISHED HERE IN SOME YEARS.

RITCHIE IS AN ACCOMPLISHED POET WHO READS AND DISCUSSES HER POETRY WELL. HER STRONG INTEREST IN LOCAL WRITERS AND HER WILLINGNESS TO SPEND LONG HOURS WITH THEM OFFERING COUNSEL AND ADVICE ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXCELLENT IMPRESSION SHE MADE DURING HER VISIT.

B. VIDEOTAPE CLIP SERVICE SCORES -- A POST-PRODUCED VIDEOTAPE CLIP OF THE ARRIVAL OF JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL AND UNCLASSIFIED

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MR. CHARLES RHYNE OF THE WORLD PEACE THROUGH LAW CENTER WAS USED BY ALL FIVE TELEVISION STATIONS ON THEIR EVENING NEWS PROGRAMS. THE CLIP FEATURED BOTH MARSHALL AND RHYNE ARRIVAL REMARKS ON THE IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY OF HUMAN RIGHTS./ PHILLIPS

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Message Attributes

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